

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6903
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0452

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: KATATURA TENSION EASES

REF: CAPE TOWN 0446

1. SUMMARY: TENSION HAS REPORTEDLY DIMINISHED IN WINDHOEK AND STRIKING OVAMBO LABORERS HAVE RETURNED TO WORK. DEMOCRATIC TURNHALLE ALLIANCE AND SWANU OFFICIALS BLAME SWAPO FOR THE ORIGINAL DISTURBANCE WHILE SWAPO OFFICIALS CHARGE THE SAG INSTIGATED THE INCIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS MARCH 8, THERE WAS A MARKED LESSENING OF TENSION IN THE KATATURA TOWNSHIP NEAR
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WINDHOEK. WINDHOEK SOURCES TELL US THAT SPORADIC MINOR INCIDENTS DID OCCUR THE EVENING AND EARLY MORNING OF MARCH 7-8, BUT THAT THESE WERE NOT SERIOUS. TWO MORE BODIES WERE DISCOVERED ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 8, BUT POLICE BELIEVE THEIR DEATHS ACTUALLY OCCURRED ON MARCH 5 OR 6. MEANWHILE, TENSION BUT NO SPECIFIC INCIDENT WAS REPORTED IN THE TOWNSHIP OF OMARURU,

NEAR SWAPOKMUND.

3. YESTERDAY, MARCH 7, 4,000 STRIKING OVAMBO WORKERS REPORTEDLY GATHERED AT A SOCCER FIELD AT THE OVAMBO HOSTEL COMPLEX IN KATATURA TO PUT THEIR DEMANDS FOR RETURNING TO WORK TO THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THEIR DEMANDS WERE THAT:

--HEREROS BROUGHT FROM ELSEWHERE TO KATATURA "TO TAKE PART IN THE FIGHTING" SHOULD BE RETURNED HOME IMMEDIATELY.

--RESIDENTS AT THE HOSTEL WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN THE PAST WEEKS FOR CARRYING DANGEROUS WEAPONS SHOULD BE RELEASED.

--NO WORKER SHOULD BE DISMISSED FROM WORK FOR ABSENTEEISM AS A RESULT OF THE UNREST.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE STRIKERS REPORTEDLY SAID "UNLESS THESE DEMANDS ARE MET, WE SHALL FIND OURSELVES UNABLE TO RETURN TO WORK AND AVOID FURTHER BLOODSHED."

4. RELIABLE WINDHOEK SOURCES HAVE INFORMED US THAT THE MIGRANT OVAMBO LABORERS RETURNED TO WORK THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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MORNING, MARCH 8, AFTER MOST OF THEIR DEMANDS WERE MET BY THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING THE PREVIOUS EVENING. CHARGES AGAINST RESIDENTS FOR CARRYING DANGEROUS WEAPONS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN DROPPED, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER ANYONE IS STILL BEING HELD. HEREROS BROUGHT IN FROM OUTSIDE THE TOWNSHIP, MEANWHILE, ARE REPORTED TO BE LIKELY TO STAY IN KATATURA UNTIL SUNDAY FOR FUNERAL SERVICES AND THEN DEPART FROM THE TOWNSHIP.

5. ACCORDING TO SABC RADIO MARCH 7, OVAMBO CHIEF MINISTER NDJOBA BLAMED SWAPO FOR THE DISTURBANCES AND ACCUSED THE PARTY OF ENGINEERING THE STRIKE. GERSON VEIL OF SWANU ALSO PROVATELY BLAMED SWAPO FOR ORIGINALLY ORGANIZING THE DISTURBANCE. A SPOKESMAN AT SWAPO HEADQUARTERS IN WINDHOEK TOLD US THAT SWAPO HAD URGED WORKERS TO STAY HOME ON MARCH 6 AND 7, BUT ASKED THEM TO RETURN TO WORK ON MARCH 8. THE SPOKESMAN, HOWEVER, DENIED THAT SWAPO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR STARTING THE DISTURBANCE, AND ATTRIBUTED ITS BEGINNING TO "AGGRESSION" BY CHIEF KAPUUNO, UNDER SAG INSTIGATION. THE SAG'S MOTIVES,

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED, WERE TO SHOW THAT SWAPO DOES
NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA,
AND TO BOLSTER ITS ARGUMENT THAT SAG TROOPS MUST
REMAIN IN THE TERRITORY. THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL,
MEANWHILE, IS REPORTEDLY CONSIDERING AN INVESTIGATION
OR A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE
DISTURBANCE.
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